

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

A Preliminary Amendment to the above-identified application was submitted at National Phase Entry. The listing of claims above incorporates all of the claim amendments from the listing of claims presented in the Preliminary Amendment.

Further amendments have been made only in claim 39. The method now defined in independent claim 39 includes all of the limitations of claim 1.

Turning now to the Office Action, the issues raised therein are discussed below.
Election/Restrictions

Page 2 of the Office Action identified five groups of claims and required election of a single invention. The claim groups, however, were based on the claims originally filed in the PCT application from which this National Phase application originated, and not on the claims as presented in the Preliminary Amendment.

For clarity, the Applicants note that claims 1 to 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 29, 32, 37 to 43, 45, 47, 52, 54 to 56, 65, 71, 72, 74 to 78, 80, 81, 84, 85, 87, 88, 90 and 92 to 95 remain pending. Claims 1, 39, 56, 65 and 74 are independent claims and all of the other claims are dependent claims.

Claim 1 and the claims which depend therefrom are drawn to a framed panel unit, and therefore are believed to belong in Group I as identified on page 2 of the Office Action.

Although original claims 19 to 38 were identified as Group II in the Office Action, claims 19 to 28, 30, 31 and 33 to 36 have been cancelled, and the remaining claims 29, 32, 37 and 38 all depend from claim 1 and therefore also belong in Group I.

As noted above, the independent method claim 39 has been amended to include all of the limitations of claim 1, and therefore claim 39 as well as claims 40 to 43, 45, 47, 52, 54 and 55 which depend therefrom are drawn to the same invention as claim 1 and its dependent claims.

Of claims 56 to 73 and 92 to 94, which were identified as Group IV on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 56, 65, 71, 72 and 92 to 94 remain in the application. However, claims 92 to 94 depend from claim 1 and therefore belong to Group I.

Claims 74 to 91 were identified in the Office Action as Group V, and claims 74 to 78, 80, 81, 84, 85, 87, 88 and 90 remain in the application.

Finally, claim 95 which was added in the Preliminary Amendment depends from claim 1 and thus belongs in Group I.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 to 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 29, 32, 37 to 43, 45, 47, 52, 54, 55 and 92 to 95 are directed to a single invention, in the form of a framed panel unit and a method of forming that framed panel unit. The Applicants hereby elect these claims.

The Applicants also expressly reserve the right to pursue patent protection for the subject matter of any non-elected claims in one or more divisional applications.

Conclusion

It is believed that the present response fully addresses the restriction requirement made in the Office Action.

Applicants look forward to early and favorable reconsideration of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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